

A long journey to Japan .

Attached to the text that I had recently posted on that subject are photographs taken during the previous century. I have later revisited some of these places and most of them have lost their quietude and been altered by the growth of tourism. In the past young Japanese visited famous or historical sites in groups during their school years but now they return later with their families and children. Furthermore as Japan's neighbouring countries are progressing rapidly regional tourism is booming. On the other hand we must say that the number of European tourists in Japan is rather limited while compared with what is found in the rest of South East Asia: Japan is not only a far away but also an expensive place, Americans may be just a bit more numerous than Europeans, a consequence of closer relations between US and Japan since the end of the war.

In 2000 I made videos of two sites: Nara and Mikimoto Island. Although the level of cultural interest of both places still remains high, they have been enlarged and modernized to absorb the huge increase of visitors. In the case of Mikimoto Pearl Island its visit was in the yearly days similar to the visit of an army camp: an escort and being told what you can or cannot see. Now there are two totally different businesses on that site: the handling of freely going visitors discovering the island, with of course the pressure on them to purchase pearls, and the closed part covering the real business: the processing of the cultured pearls.

For those interested in these videos here is the link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/co16xtjom4buq5o/Japan%20Oct.%202000.mp4?dl=0>

Regards to all,

Bernard Leroy